Unity in diversity : English puritans and the puritan reformation, 1603-1689

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Chapter 7

Defining Puritans and Puritanism: Narrative and Metanarrative

7.1 Introduction

While a sufficient definition of English Puritanism continues to elude historians, this has not stayed the use of the terms *Puritan* and *Puritanism*.[1] In the first chapter we saw, briefly, how various historians have attempted to define Puritanism.[2] We also saw that some leading historians, given the sheer difficulty of identifying a definition that is encompassing enough, are now referring to *Puritanisms*.[3] This shift is not too different

[1] Most English historians continue to employ "Puritan" and "Puritanism" with confidence. See, for instance, Patrick Collinson, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-12; Bernard Capp, *England's Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and Its Enemies in the Interregnum, 1649-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-12; Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript and Puritanism in England, 1580-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10-15; Michael P. Winship, *Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 30-31; Catherine Gimelli Martin, *Milton Among the Puritans: The Case for Historical Revisionism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 31-64; John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-18; Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England: The Caroline Puritan Movement, c.1620-1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1-8; N. H. Keeble, "Milton and Puritanism," in *A Companion to Milton,* ed. Thomas N. Corns (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 124-40; Ann Hughes, "Anglo-American Puritanisms," *Journal of British Studies* 39 (2000), pp 1-7; John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689* (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 1-16; Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, "Introduction: The Puritan Ethos, 1560-1700," in *The Culture of English Puritanism* (New York: Palgrave, 1996), 1-31; and John S. Morrill, "The Impact of Puritanism," in his *The Impact of the English Civil War* (London: Collins and Brown, 1991), 50-66.

[2] In his essay, "Defining Puritanism—Again?," Peter Lake writes that "The definition of Puritanism is an issue which has been both addressed and avoided to great profit by many scholars. The result is that it is not a subject upon which there is anything very new to say." Lake, "Defining Puritanism—Again?," in *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, ed. Francis J. Bremer (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 3. I agree with Lake's tempered optimism, but would note that while there may not be much new to say, there is indeed the possibility of reappraising what scholars are currently saying and of addressing tendencies towards deconstruction, which is gaining momentum; indeed, Patrick Collinson has long agonized over the subject. See Alexandra Walsham and John Morrill, "Preface," in *Richard Bancroft and Anti-Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), ix-xvi. See also Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1983); Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library, 1989); Collinson, "Ecclesiastical Vitriol: Religious Satire in the 1590s and the Invention of Puritanism," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[3] Michael P. Winship writes, "It has recently been suggested, somewhat hyperbolically, that it is more useful to talk of 'puritanisms' rather than 'puritanism,' for there were almost as many puritanisms as there were puritans." Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 3. Here Winship has in mind Ann Hughes's influential essay, "Anglo-American Puritanisms," *Journal of British Studies* 39 (2000): 1-7, which is a brief assessment of Lake's and David R. Como's work on the subject. As early as 1974, H. J. Kearney wrote that there were as many "puritanisms" as "socialisms." See Kearney, "Puritanism and Science: Problems of Definitions," in *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Charles Webster (New York: Routledge, 1974), 255.

from recent trends in Reformation historiography that speak of the *Reformations*.[4] The ideas behind this are simple: there is simply too much diversity within Puritanism (and even more so within the Reformation) to write of monolithicism; the various theologies and expressions are too different and any collective term does not give due weight to the various overtones of sixteenth and seventeenth-century religious history; any attempt to classify Puritanism by its piety minimalizes the pietism of other Reformed writers; the phenomena, it seems, especially within an English context, are too loose and disconnected.[5] But the lingering question is whether this deconstruction compromises something. With respect to the *Reformations*, Scott H. Hendrix believes so and has argued for a plurality of agendas within the Reformation rather than a plurality of Reformations. The united vision of the Lutheran and Reformed were to "recultivate the vineyard" or promote Christianization; further, all the various branches of the Reformation shared a common patristic and medieval spring from which they drew. Though there were many Reformation "orthodoxies," they were united in a common vision for the Reformation of the known world.[6]

What of Puritanism? Is there more unity or more diversity within the tradition? Were the Puritans united in a greater vision of Puritan Reformation? Is it possible to write of *Puritanism* when discussing the more pious factions of early modern Protestant religion? Or, given the immense diversity of the religious groups associated with the tradition, especially during the English Revolution and afterwards, is it better to abandon *Puritan* and *Puritanism* altogether and come up with alternatives, such as *Reformed, Calvinists, Separatists, Radicals, Evangelicals*, *the "Godly,"* or simply *Reformed orthodox*? Or, was Margo Todd correct when she said, "a puritan by any other name is still a puritan."[7] Indeed, there are prominent historians on either side of the question; some have suggested abandoning "Puritan" and "Puritanism" while others have vigorously defended them; and still others have chosen other, seeming more appropriate terms, as just noted. All concede, however, to the immense historical and historiographical problems arising from their use.[8] Should the terms be retained, how are we to understand them? Is there a

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[4] Cp. C. Scott Dixon, *Contesting the Reformation* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 9-12, with Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations,* 2nd ed. (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 1-22.

[5] Francis J. Bremer, "Introduction," in *Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America*, ed. Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 1:xiii-xiv. On pietism within the Reformed more generally, a clear case study is Johannes Cocceius, who combined Reformed theology with piety. More broadly, Stephen Foster writes, "Because practical divinity was so deeply rooted in its own time and place, many of its means for a 'lively' education in godliness were endorsed by a great variety of Englishmen who can in no sense be termed Puritan." Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 76. For a partially opposing viewpoint, see Eric Josef Carlson, "'Practical Divinity': Richard Greenham's Ministry in Elizabethan England," in *Religion and the English People, 1500-1640: New Voices, New Perspectives*, ed. Eric Josef Carlson (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 1998), 147-200.

[6] Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), xv-xxiv; and cf. the responses to Hendrix's thesis in *The Reformation as Christianization*, ed. A.M. Johnson and John A. Maxfield (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

[7] Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 9.

[8] Perhaps the most comprehensive criticism of "Puritan" and "Puritanism" is C. H. George, "Puritanism as History and Historiography," *Past and Present* 41 (1968): 77-104. The best defense of its use is

way of defining Puritanism that acknowledges both the unities and diversities within the tradition without having to abandon the term altogether or resigning to alternatives which have their own historiographical issues? Is it possible to distinguish between a confessionally minded tradition within Puritanism, and its more radical expressions? I believe so.

In this chapter, I will attempt to answer these questions and suggest that *Puritan* and *Puritanism* should be retained in scholarly use.[9] This conclusion is based on the findings of this thesis and on a careful assessment of the massive body of literature on this subject.[10] First, I will present a nuanced agenda for defining Puritanism. Second, I will present a case for metanarrative or the idea that one must consider *Puritanism* as a whole in order to understand its various parts. Third, I will conclude the chapter with observations on how *Puritan* and *Puritanism* should be applied when referring to sixteenth and seventeenth-century individuals. In short, I will criticize the use of *Puritanisms* while also conceding that Puritanism was by no means a monolithic movement, at least not in the sense of Puritans being centered on the notion of the covenant, but rather that there was within Puritanism a majority of confessionally minded Puritans.[11] This method, it is hoped, will set the course for future studies in that it reiterates the need for both narrative and metanarrative when looking at early modern intellectual and social history, and, by definition, requires consonance across various cognate disciplines. It suggests that Norbert Elias was correct when he observed that the individual should not be considered above his society, which in itself would tend to *Puritanisms*, but

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Lake, "Defining Puritanism—Again?," 3-29. A tempered approach is seen in Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 5-11.

[9] I am not aware of any recent historian who has actually, in practice, abandoned the term altogether, except Conrad Russell who opts for the synonym "the godly." Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 85. It should be noted, however, that any term used to supplant "Puritan" or "Puritanism" will have equal, if not greater, historiographical issues, as is the case with "Calvinist," "Reformed," and other like terms.

[10] Thus John H. Primus's observation that "an entire dissertation [could] be devoted to the history of efforts to define Puritanism;" and Patrick Collinson's comment that a "secondary academic industry has arisen, devoted to the search for an acceptable definition." John H. Primus, *Richard Greenham: The Portrait of an Elizabethan Pastor* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 4; Patrick Collinson, *English Puritanism* (London: The Historical Association, 1983), 6.

[11] I am here indebted to Janice Knight's *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). Knight correctly sees certain polarities within Puritanism and questions Perry Miller's idea of monolithicism, but goes too far, I think, in seeing multiple "orthodoxies." While there were indeed multiple confessions in the seventeenth century, there was nonetheless great harmony and agreement on most topics, as is seen in widespread confessional consensus and such harmonies as the English adaptation of the Geneva *Harmonia confessionum fidei* in 1586 and the publication of *An Harmony of the Confessions of the Christian and Reformed Churches* (1643). Thus, while Knight's classifications of "Intellectual Fathers" and "Spiritual Brethren" helps to illuminate various emphases within Puritanism, they should not be seen as rigid distinctions between opposing groups, nor, contra Knight, should orthodoxy be seen as a battleground. Indeed, Knight's major neglect in her work on "orthodoxies" is that she does not give due consideration to the flexibility of confessional boundaries or the overly charged rhetoric of the period's polemical works. Furthermore, disagreements among leading clergy do not suggest vying orthodoxies, but rather the various ways in which doctrines could be understood and restated within an orthodox sense. Cf. Stephen Foster, "New England and the Challenge of Heresy, 1630-1660: The Puritan Crisis in Transatlantic Perspective," *The William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Oct, 1981): 624-60.

rather within and belonging to a society or plurality of persons who interacted with each other; and that Wittgenstein ideas of *Familienähnlichkeit* is further helpful in understanding both *unitas* and *diversitas* within Puritanism.

7.2 Defining Puritanism

As we saw before, defining Puritanism is wrought with difficulties, and has often led historians to give up the enterprise in utter frustration.[12] This is not only because the literature of the subject is immense, but also because *historically* there are many gray areas and often it is impossible to tell when and where the line should be drawn, as, for instance, between Puritanism and a moderate Calvinist consensus within the English church, or between its majority expression and its more radical developments, as seen in such figures as Giles Randall, John Milton, and Walter Craddock.[13] Defining Puritanism is further complicated in that the use of the term is heuristic and its usage has changed over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though the use of the term "Puritan" was initially pejorative, it nonetheless was an attempt to describe and react to something

[12] For studies of the problems and approaches associated with the definition of Puritanism, see Michael G. Finlayson, *Historians, Puritanism and the English Revolution: The Religious Factor in English Politics Before and After the Interregnum* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Basil Hill, "Puritanism: the Problem of Definition," in *Studies in Church History, Vol. 2*, ed. G. J. Cuming (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 283-96; Peter Lake, "The Historiography of Puritanism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism,* ed. John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 346-71; "Defining Puritanism—Again?," 1-27; Patrick Collinson, "Puritans," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation,* ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Lawrence A. Sasek, *Images of English Puritanism: A Collection of Contemporary Sources, 1589-1646* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 1-27; John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9-22; Patrick Collinson, "A Comment: Concerning the Name Puritan," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980): 483-88; J. Sears McGee, *The Godly Man in Stuart England: Anglicans, Puritans, and the Two Tables, 1620-1670* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 1-14; John Coffey, "Puritanism, Evangelicalism, and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition," in *Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities,* ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 255-61; Coffey, "The Problem of 'Scottish Puritanism,'" 66-90; and Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689*, 1-27.

[13] Michael P. Winship, "Defining Puritanism in Restoration England: Richard Baxter and Others Respond to 'A Friendly Debate,'" *The Historical Journal* 54:3 (2011): 689; David R. Como, "Puritans, Predestination and the Construction of Orthodoxy in Early Seventeenth-Century England," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660,* ed. Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 64-87; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 12. Indeed, Collinson and Tyacke have tended to view puritans as a "hardly-distinguishable" element among the Elizabethan church's Calvinist consensus. Others, such as Fincham, Lake, and Webster see a more distinct group within that consensus. Cambers, *Godly Reading,* 12. Cp. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1967); Collinson, *The Religion of the Protestants: The Church In English Society, 1599-1625* (Oxford, 1982); Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism, c.1590-1640* (Oxford, 1987), with Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982); Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford, 1990); Peter Lake, "Defining Puritanism—Again?"; Lake, "Moving the Goal Posts? Modified Subscription and the Construction of Conformity in the Early Stuart Church," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), 179-205; and Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England*.

real within the Established church;[14] it is undeniable that its initial use was descriptive of a "hotter-sort" of Protestantism characterized by its zeal that was preoccupied with wanting simplicity in worship, and removing its various perceived "popish" ceremonies in an attempt to "ostracize all Catholics."[15] Some historians have aptly described this Puritan motif as "discontents."[16] This perceived discontentedness is the earliest use and connotation of the word "Puritan." Indeed, this early status or connotation of Puritanism as a "movement" for ecclesial reform has led scholars to describe Puritanism chiefly within political terms, and coterminous with such environments. In other words, Puritanism is seen as one half of a stressful relationship within a particular set of circumstances. Where this overt tension does not exist, there is no Puritanism.[17] Thus Collinson and Foster, among others, favor a more *nominalist* approach to defining Puritanism as a "movement" within the English church as opposed to more *realist* intellectual constructs, though Collinson has also defined Puritanism as a "strenuous search for salvation according to Calvinist understandings."[18] But, as said before, Puritanism cannot simply be defined in

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[14] Collinson notes that though the label "Puritan" first arose as "stereotypical stigma" that it was "a badge soon accepted by the so-called Puritans themselves." Patrick Collinson, *From Cranmer to Sancroft* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), xiii-xiv.

[15] R. C. Richardson, *Puritanism in North-West England: A Regional Study of the Diocese of Chester in 1642* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 160; John H. Primus, *The Vestments Controversy: An Historical Study of the Earliest Tensions with the Church of England in the Reigns of Edward Vi and Elizabeth* (Kampen: Kok, 1960), 4. See also Dwight Brautigam, "Prelates and Politics: Uses of 'Puritan,' 1625-40," in *Puritanism and Its Discontents,* ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing, 2003), 49-66; Collinson, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism*, 1-12; Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 27. Carl R. Trueman, who has grown increasingly cautious over the years, once defined "Puritanism" as "that tendency to push fore a more thoroughly Reformed theology and ecclesiology within sections of the Anglican Church between the early 1530s and 1662, the date of the most important Act of Uniformity. The definition is far from perfect; but it is probably as good as it gets…" Trueman, "Puritanism as Ecumenical Theology," *Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis* 81:3 (2001): 327.

[16] See Laura Lunger Knoppers, ed. *Puritanism and Its Discontents* (Cranbury: University of Delaware Press, 2008). In 1974, H. F. Kearney defined Puritanism as "a growing circle of dissent." Kearney, "Puritanism and Science: The Problems of Definition," in *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century,* ed. Charles Webster (New York: Routledge, 1974), 255.

[17] Kenneth L. Campbell, *Windows into Men's Souls: Religious Nonconformity in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 15; Peter Lake, "Introduction: Puritanism, Arminianism and Nicholas Tyacke," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England,* ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 6 (fn 15); Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988); Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement,* 14.

In *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton* (Cambridge, 1998), Achsah Guibbory divides religion in the seventeenth-century English church between "Puritans" and "ceremonialists," but Kate Narveson cautions against too sharp of distinctions as the lines are not so easily drawn. Narveson, "Profession or Performance? Religion in Early Modern Literary Study," in *Fault Lines and Controversies in the Study of Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, edited by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 116

[18] Morgan, *Godly Learning,* 20; John Coffey, "The Problem of 'Scottish Puritanism', 1590-1638," 68; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 33. I am here indebted to Morgan and Coffey for distinguishing between "nominalist" and "realist" approaches in the definition of Puritanism. Intriguingly, Primus calls Lake's approach "nominalist," which suggests, as Coffey has observed with Collinson, that various historians have different "modes" which teeter between nominalism and realism. My own approach is a convergence of the two. Primus, *Richard Greenham,* 4; Morgan, *Godly Learning,* 17. See

terms of its piety, or desire for salvation; were that the case, the whole of Christendom could be classified as "Puritan."

Though there are generally two sides to the definitions problem; that is, those who question its usefulness (C. H. George, Basil Hall, Michael Finlayson, and Paul Christianson) and those who show more optimism (Patrick Collinson, Ian Breward, Peter Lake, John Coffey, David Como, among others), there exists a wide spectrum of ideas in between.[19] Some have suggested that Puritanism had "no static spiritual or moral essence," that it was a protean phenomenon.[20] Indeed, over the past sixty-five years "great effort has been expended on the attempt to devise a universally acceptable definition of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism.'"[21] Various historians, at different times, have suggested different defining features of Puritanism, such as the covenant, experimental predestinarianism, millenarianism, assurance of faith, affective Biblicism, or even iconoclasm.[22] For Sprunger, "the essence of Puritanism was a balanced combination of Calvinist theology and intense personal piety;" thus Puritanism is essentially to be identified as a highly experiential or "hot" English Reformed theology.[23] John Spurr claimed that Puritans "were simply more intensely protestant than their protestant neighbors or even the Church of England."[24] Others, as said before, prefer to define Puritanism chiefly within its political contexts.[25] The major flaw in this last approach, however, is that it suggests the "collapse of Puritanism into the Calvinist mainstream" when there was not a strong overt "agitation for

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also Patrick Collinson, "The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture" (University of California, Los Angeles, 1989); Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*; and Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Sapping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

[19] C. H. George preferred "the Protestant mind" over "Puritan" but the former is too inclusivist in that a robust Anglican ceremonialism and thoroughbred Arminianism could equally be included in the term. In 1972, Breward predicted, "It is my conviction, that far from leading to the abolition of 'puritanism,' further study will lead to its reinstatement as an important factor in the causation of the civil war and the search for a new basis for church and society that marked the interregnum." Breward, "The Abolition of Puritanism," *The Journal of Religious History,* Vol. 7, No. 1 (1972), 34. I applaud Breward's optimism because he rightly sees this fierier brand of Protestant religious experience as a causative force in the period's society and politics. Cf. John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9.

[20] Martin, *Milton among the Puritans*, 32.

[21] Morgan, *Godly Learning,* 9.

[22] David Zaret, *The Heavenly Contract: Ideology and Organization in Pre-Revolutionary Puritanism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985); Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689*, 156-7; Lake, "Puritan Identities," 118-19; Stephen A. Bondos-Greene, "The End of an Era: Cambridge Puritanism and the Christ's College Election of 1609," *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 25, No. 1 (March 1982): 197-208; David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 41; Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm During the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), xiii.

[23] Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of the English and Scottish Churches in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1982)*,* 457.

[24] Spurr, *English Puritanism*, 4.

[25] Thus, Puritanism, in this sense, becomes irrevocably tied to anti-Puritanism. See Collinson, *Richard Bancroft and Elizabethan Anti-Puritanism*, 1-12, 60-82; Collinson, "Antipuritanism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 24.

further reformation."[26] This view essentially challenges distinctive characteristics within Puritanism, and should either be dismissed (for those who would define Puritanism solely as a political movement), or nuanced to allow for a distinctive style of piety and divinity. Lake and Como have suggested that the various internal Puritan tensions within Puritanism and its competing strands have, at times, had the potential to threaten the social order and its religious unity.[27] Arnold Hunt sees preference for the spoken word as distinguishing puritan culture.[28] Others have focused on various aspects of piety, the pious life, or "reformation of morals and manners."[29] N. H. Keeble wrote that though "it is impossible to offer a precise definition of Puritanism in ecclesiological, doctrinal, or political terms, there is not, in practice, much difficulty in recognizing the puritan spirit."[30] Thus, there is a certain intuition on what Puritanism is, though there has never been, and possibly never will be, a consensus on how to understand it. This intuition has, perhaps, most often identified Puritanism as a distinct forms of religious experience, which centers on divine love, both in the soul and in the life of the community, and an extreme sense of self-sinfulness.[31] William A. Dryness sees within Puritanism a distinct approach to visual

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[26] Lake, "Introduction," 6 (n. 15); on Haigh and Walsham's views on the internal tensions, see Lake, "Introduction: Puritanism, Arminianism and Nicholas Tyacke," in *Religious Politics in Post Reformation England: Essays in Honor of Nicholas Tyacke*, edited by Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 13 (n. 40). Foster criticizes this view when he states, "Frequent points of contacts…never added up to wholesale congruence, and it has become too easy to dissolve the Puritan movement in the larger culture of which it was a subspecies." Foster, *The Long Argument*, 76.

[27] Como, *Blown by the Spirit*, 439; Peter Lake and David R. Como, "'Orthodoxy and Its Discontents: Dispute Settlement and the Production of 'Consensus' in the London (Puritan) Underground," *Journal of British Studies,* Vol. 39, No. 1 (January, 2000): 66-70; David R. Como and Peter Lake, "Puritans, Antinomians and Laudians in Caroline London: The Strange Case of Peter Shaw and Its Contents," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. 50, No. 4 (October, 1999): 684-715; Ian Atherton and David Como, "The Burning of Edward Wightman: Puritanism, Prelacy and the Politics of Heresy in Early Modern England," *English Historical Review* (December 2005): 1215-50; Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge: "Orthodoxy," "Heterodoxy" and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Lake, *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); David R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); and Theodore D. Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[28] Hunt, *The Art of Hearing,* 30.

[29] Bernard S. Capp, *England's Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and Its Enemies in the Interregnum 1649-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-3; Bruce C. Daniels, *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 3-26; Ronald P. Gildrie, *Profane, the Civil, and the Godly: The Formation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679-1749* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1994), 1; Dewey D. Wallace, *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), i; Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Levin L. Schücking, *The Puritan Family: A Social Study from the Literary Sources* (1929; New York: Schocken Books, 1970); Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (1944, repr. New York: Harper, 1966). Patrick Collinson wrote, "a whole book could be devoted to the distinctive culture of the godly household." Collinson, "Puritanism as Popular Religious Culture," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 56.

[30] Keeble, "Milton and Puritanism," 125.

[31] Charles Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-5; Hugh M. Richmond, *Puritans and Libertines: Anglo-French Literary Relations in*

culture, which centered on attitudes toward popular culture, within a strict biblical framework, for which the Bible "was not a straightjacket, but a 'rich and infinitely varied source of imagination and formal inspiration.'"[32]

While there are merits in the many approaches to definition just mentioned, they are either too negative or isolationist. They either deny the heuristic use of the term or suggest a defining feature of Puritanism where there is none; thus, John Stachniewski sees English Puritanism as an impulse driven by intense predestinarian convictions, which lead to and are interwoven with religious despair.[33] R. T. Kendall's notion of "experimental Calvinism," which is again tied to predestination, does little to alleviate the problem, because while Puritanism was that, it was much more.[34] Indeed, predestination was a central and commanding influence among Puritans, but it was not the *sine qua non* of Puritanism because there were varieties of opinion on how it should be understood; further, it was a common doctrine among Catholics, Reformed, and Arminians.[35] Though predestination should not be seen as the defining feature of Puritanism, or of the Reformed more broadly, this is not to minimize the strong predestinarian convictions that the Puritans generally shared; indeed, as I have shown in prior chapters, predestination and assurance were often inseparable from the Puritan conscience, and great effort was expended in order to resolve the pastoral issues that it inevitably raised, especially as the movement grew in maturity and came into its own in the seventeenth century.[36]

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the Reformation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 166. There is much warrant in seeing a distinctive sense of sinfulness, which are clearly depicted in the diaries of Richard Rogers, Samuel Ward, Thomas Shepard, Michael Wigglesworth, Samuel Rogers, and Cotton Mather. See M. M. Knappen, ed., *Two Elizabethan Diaries by Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward* (Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1933); Michael McGiffert, ed., *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1994); Edmund S. Morgan, ed., *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657: The Conscience of a Puritan* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Tom Webster and Kenneth Shipps, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Rogers, 1634-1638* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004); Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *The Diary of Cotton Mather*, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1911).

[32] William A. Dryness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 118-21; Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 99. Cf. Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 136, for Puritan hatred of stain-glassed windows.

[33] See John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[34] R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), esp. pt. III; John Coffey, "A Ticklish Business: Defining Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Puritan Revolution," in *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture,* ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 108.

[35] See David R. Como, "Puritans, Predestination and the Construction of Orthodoxy in Early Seventeenth-Century England," in *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1660,* ed. Peter Lake and Michael Questier (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 64-87. Augustinian and Thomist notions of predestination and election come scintillatingly close to that of the Reformed. Cf. Frank A. James III, *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Predestination: The Augustinian Inheritance of an Italian Reformer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination from Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 62.

[36] Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, "Introduction," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 8.

Defining Puritanism in more *realist* terms as a particular style within English divinity, which expressed itself in varying degrees of hotness or intensity, as the times dictated, over the course of its theological, historical, and social existence, can ameliorate these difficulties.[37] Understanding Puritanism as a consisting of *Familienähnlichkeit*, co-existing in relation to earlier Elizabethan Puritanism, is not only essential to allow for *diversitas* among Puritans, but also to give due weight to their remarkable *unitas* and theological identity. This "style" or Puritan "ethos" was not so much the existence of any particular doctrines, which could not be seen in other religious circles, as, in fact, they were, but the way in which these doctrines were interwoven into something unique. Thus Puritanism should be seen as a cluster of attitudes and priorities that worked within but were not absorbed by "the wider bodies of Reformed thought and feeling" which dominated "the Elizabethan and Jacobean theological and ecclesiastical establishments."[38] The unities found within Downame, Rous, and Crisp, as discussed in Chapter 6, confirm this approach to definition; indeed, this broader definition allows for variance among its adherents as well as for both synchronic and diachronic unity. Puritanism defined too narrowly would exclude those dissenters who characterized the movement in the latter half of the seventeenth century, while making Puritanism too broad so as to include all of the most radical sects of the English Revolution would, to some degree, compromise any meaningful designation.[39] In short, Puritanism should be defined diachronically in looking at how it changed or evolved from its earliest political and religious ambitions in the sixteenth century, to its more mature expression and confessionalization in the seventeenth; and synchronically in the lives and theologies of its particular adherents. In other words, Puritanism should be assessed in its narrative and metanarrative.

The benefit of this approach is seen, partly, in Lake's work on the subject. In his *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (1982), Lake examines the life and work of Laurence Chaderton, the "pope of Cambridge puritanism," and contrasts that to other noted "puritans" of the time: Edward Dering, Thomas Cartwright, William Whitaker, and William Bradshaw.[40] Lake sees a distinctive approach to divinity in these pastors and a common thread or style among them.[41] Further, in his "Defining Puritanism—Again" (1993), Lake outlines his approach to defining Puritanism by combining two distinct paths:

> I would wish to see Puritanism as a distinctive style of piety and divinity, made up not so much of distinctively Puritan component parts, the mere presence of

[37] Lake, "Puritan Identities," 20. Kenneth L. Campbell affirms the merits of Lake's approach in seeing Puritanism tied to godly expression and religious zeal in contrast to a "clear-cut party label." Campbell, *Windows into Men's Souls: Religious Nonconformity in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 13.

[38] Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge*, 12; Hunt, *The Art of Preaching*, 30.

[39] See, for instance, Michael P. Winship's "Defining Puritanism in Restoration England: Richard Baxter and Others Respond to a Friendly Debate," *The Historical Journal* 54, No. 3 (September 2011): 689-715, esp. 714-15, where Winship applies the term "puritanism" to the internal conflicts within the Restoration Church of England. Gary S. De Krey has suggested that early-modern Protestantism should be divided into Anglican, Reformed Protestant (Puritan as a subset), and Sectarian. Gary S. De Krey, *London and the Restoration, 1659-1683* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5, 92, 125-34.

[40] Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* 116; see also 77-115, 262-78. For the "pope" comment, see Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement,* 435.

[41] Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* 279-92.

> which in a person's thought or practice rendered them definitely a Puritan, as a synthesis made of strands most or many of which taken individually could be found in non-Puritan as well as Puritan contexts, but which taken together formed a distinctively Puritan synthesis or style.[42]

This approach prevents historians from seeing distinctive traits where there are none; it also allows for a variance of expression within Puritanism over the course of its existence. Thus, for instance, predestination should be seen not as a distinctive Puritan trait in the sense that were one to adhere to it that would classify them as a Puritan, but rather predestination woven with an English Reformed symbiosis of doctrine and practice, generally operating within confessional sensibilities, and united in common understandings of God, covenant, justification, sanctification, the Christian life, morals and manners, among others, within a specific historical context.[43] Affinities to other Reformed expressions, such as that of Dutch precisianism, or the experiential theology of Johannes Cocceius, for instance, were as influenced by English Puritanism, as they were independent from it.[44] This is seen not only in their direct relationships with many English Puritans, but also through the existence of English churches in the continent, rogue Puritan presses overseas, and the distribution of "canonic" English Puritan sources.[45]

While I favor Lake's more *realist* approach to defining Puritanism, especially in that it posits Puritanism as a more distinguishable group among the "Calvinist bedrock" within the English Church,[46] I cannot deny the merits of Collinson's *nominalist* approach. Puritans not only had a distinct way of doing things, a distinct way of thinking about the Christian life and the Christian's place within this world, they were also involved in

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[42] Lake, "Defining Puritanism—Again?," 6.

[43] This approach comes close to Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of *familienähnlichkeit* in that it suggests that things or concepts believed to be connected by a common feature may be connected by "overlapping similarities" and family resemblances. See Michael Forster, "Wittgenstein on Family Resemblance Concepts," in *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations: A Critical Guide,* ed. Arif Ahmed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 66-87.

[44] Voetius's reliance on English Puritanism is well known. Cocceius was a student of William Ames at the University of Franeker when the latter was in exile there. See Keith L. Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds of English and American Puritanism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1972).

[45] See Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, 13-42; Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printing in the Netherlands, 1600-1640* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1-27; 84-169. By "canonic," I refer to the growing body of divinity and piety endorsed or recommended in popular Puritan treatises. For instance, for the study of divinity, Cotton Mather recommends Wollebius's *Manuductio ad Theologiam*, Ames's *Medulla Theologiae*, Markus Friedrich Wendelin's *Compendium Theologia Christianae* (1646), the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* of the Leiden divines (1642), Ussher's *Body of Divinity* (1645), as well as the works of Alting, Tuckney, Heningius, Aretius, Edwards, Witsius, Mastricht, Gerhard, Voetius, Owen, Perkins, Scudder, Bolton, Dyke (Jeremiah and Daniel), Sibbes, Capel, Fenner, Burroughs, Gurnall, and Baxter, among others of that "good old puritan divinity." Cotton Mather, *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (Boston, 1726), 84-89, 100-1.

Though Mather prefers Mastricht's *Theoretico-Practica Theologia* above all, he does say of Calvin, "You might wonder at me, if I should forget Calvin's *Institutions*, to which the concurrent opinion of them that wished well to the reformed religion assigned a preference before all the writings that the church of God has enjoyed since the apostolical…" Idem, *Manuductio ad Ministerium,* 84-5. Puritanism itself was an eclectic symbiosis of English and continental sources.

[46] Cambers, *Godly Reading*, 11.

something greater: an agenda for the reformation of their society. They were involved in a Puritan Reformation, which thought of the ideal Christian life as one of precise living. Given the profundity of positive Puritan "character literature" within the 1640s, and earlier, those Puritans who embraced the term were accustomed to look back on the good "old English Puritan" with nostalgia and respect. This longing became an integral aspect of their kinship with Elizabethan Puritanism.[47]

In addition, this view coincides with the more recent advances in the social sciences proposed by Norbert Elias, who argued that people should be understood within their context of society; being interdependent on one another, and reacting in response to various processes for change, Elias's concept of "configuration" seeks to see the "web of independences formed among human beings and which connects them; that is to say, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent persons."[48] It avoids older sociological notions that would put "the individual above society" and "society above the individual," as though individuals and societies were distinct and operated in isolation from the other.[49] This "web" of connections and interdependencies within Puritanism, in its reliance on other forms of thought and "canonical" texts, which were shared across continents, should overturn notions that Puritans were independent from the greater society to which they belonged. At the same time, their reliance on society, as such, should not be seen as an eradication of the individual, or denial of variances in the way thoughts and ideas were expressed, so long as they coalesced with the social and intellectual status of that tradition. It is in this sense that *unitas in diversitate* can help to sort out some of these issues, in that it accounts for diversity and distinction on an individual level, but also for unity in shared social experiences, belief, and *familienähnlichkeit*. Seeing Puritanism as a *cluster* of attitudes and priorities, which exist in relation to each other, and are interdependent on the society and intellectual milieu of the time can provide immense fruition in ongoing studies of how to see and understand Puritanism.[50] It confirms Coffey's observation that "the godly were often at odds with each other in matters theological, and such doctrinal consensus as existed did not come easily."[51]

Thus, in sum, Puritanism, though fissiparous in nature, should be seen as a collective cluster of attitudes and ideas shared among its members within an English Reformed context of dissent, and characterized by its degree of hotness or intensity in piety. It cannot be understood only in terms of thought or behavior, but in the way

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[47] See, for instance, John Geree, *The Character of an Old English Puritan* (London, 1646), sig. A2-3, and the many book recommendations in Downame's *Guide*, which were typical of Puritanism's "canon" of devotional texts.

[48] Norbert Elias, *O processo civilzador,* trans. Ruy Jungmaan (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1990), 249. Quoted in Tania Quintaneiro, "The Concept of Figuration or Configuration in Norbert Elias' Sociological Theory," *Teor. Soc. Vol.2 no se Belo Horizonate* (2006).

[49] Norbert Elias, *Norbert Elias por ele mesmo,* trans. André Telles (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2001), 148. Quoted in Tania Quintaneiro, "The Concept of Figuration or Configuration in Norbert Elias' Sociological Theory," *Teor. Soc. Vol.2 no se Belo Horizonate* (2006).

[50] For Elias's ideas on the dependence between society and its members, see Elias, *The Society of Individuals* (1939; repr. New York: Continuum, 1991).

[51] John Coffey, "A Ticklish Business: Defining Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Puritan Revolution," in *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English* Culture, ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 108.

thought and behavior intersect into something unique, a *medulla divinitatis* or *theologiae*.[52] It was promulgated from the pulpit and presses by members of the "Puritan church militant," and infected a wider body of Calvinists and others to varying degrees.[53] But this simple definition is not enough; due weight must to be given to the greater aims of individual and collective Puritans as they sought to reform their lives, church, and nation. Just as individual Puritans had often unique, though complimentary, ways of discussing the theology to which they subscribed, they were part of something greater. We will now turn to narrative and metanarrative as useful concepts to understand Puritanism.

7.3 Narrative and Metanarrative

In his book *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* Lake suggests that the proper way to come to a definition or understanding of Puritanism is to do so by its characters; that is, by first studying and examining the puritans who by any definition make up the movement.[54] We thus define Puritanism by Puritans.[55] He suggests that to define Puritanism too early in a study might create an exercise in circular reasoning; for instance, a definition too narrow brings the danger that "the results of the entire enterprise would be determined by the initial point of reference."[56] Thus he urges scholars to take a more inductive approach and suggests that the concept of Puritanism "should only emerge from a study of the activities of particular men [and women] in particular contexts, acting and reacting to events over a period."[57] Lake has done this in his work on Chaderton and Stephen Dennison.[58] Others have done this on Heywood, Wallington, Baxter, Prynne, the Newdigates, or the Harleys.[59] While Lake used Chaderton, a Puritan by any definition, to

[52] Thus, Ames's "*theologia est doctrina Deo vivendi*." Cf. John Gill's *A Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity, Vol. 1* (London, 1796), x, where Gill remarks that the use of "divinity" is peculiar to the English in contrast to "foreign writers who never entitle their works of this kind…"

[53] David Hoyle, *Reformation and Religious Identity in Cambridge, 1590-1644* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 106.

[54] For biographical memoirs of "common consent" Puritans, see Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster, ed., *Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America, Volume 1* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006); Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans: A Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006); Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans*, 3 vols. (London: Printed for James Black, 1813); and James Reid, *Memoirs of the Lives and Writings of Those Eminent Divines who Convened in the Famous Assembly at Westminster*, 2 vols. (Paisley: Printed by Stephen and Andrew Young, 1811).

[55] Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* 11; Spurr, *English Puritanism,* 3.

[56] Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* 11.

[57] Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* 11.

[58] Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church,* 11, 25-54; Lake, *The Boxmaker's Revenge,* 11-85.

[59] See Samuel S. Thomas, *Creating Communities in Restoration England: Parish and Congregation in Oliver Heywood's Halifax* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985); Paul C. H. Lim, *In Pursuit of Purity, Unity, and Liberty: Richard Baxter's Puritan Ecclesiology in Its Seventeenth-Century Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); William Lamont, *Puritanism and Historical Controversy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 15-26; 41-54; V. M. Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture: The Seventeenth-Century Newdigates of Arbury and Their World* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995); and Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and*

contrast Cartwright and Whitaker to come up with a spectrum of ideas within Elizabethan Puritanism, I have strived to do this with the Stuart Puritans Downame, Rous, and Crisp, which more clearly shows the spectrum, continuity, and unity of Puritans across widely diversified beliefs. The findings of these studies confirm that Puritanism should be seen as a cluster of attitudes and ideas which results in a distinct expression of Reformed *dogma* and *praxis*, and which was shared across a specific time, and connected by overlapping similarities.[60] The strains of Puritanism discussed in this book (*precisianist, mystical, antinomian*) depict internal tendencies inherent within Puritanism.

It is not enough, however, to examine individual lives or narratives of Puritans because they lived within specific social, cultural, economic, political, and religious contexts. Their lives must also be seen as part of the greater context or narrative of the Puritan Reformation. This Puritan Reformation began sometime in the 1550s with a desire for further ecclesial reform, and spread into the seventeenth century with its distinctive experiential piety, and grew to maturation in the codification of that tradition at the Westminster Assembly. This tradition was challenged during the English Revolution, as its inherent tendencies became more radicalized, and then slowly dissipated towards the end of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries. What were the chief concerns of this Puritan Reformation, or how should we see it? In short, the Puritan Reformation was a movement characterized by an insistence on correct doctrine and godly conduct in concert with a further reformation of society.[61] This "doctrine according to godliness" consists of a distinct approach to personal reformation which wove self-examination and assurance with experimental predestinarianism, stressed the binding covenant that God had with his elect, endorsed justification by faith alone as distinct but inseparable from the sanctifying effects of the Spirit, and all within the rubric of anti-popery, millenarianism, sabbatarianism, and other refinements of morals and manners.[62] This blend or cluster of ideas and attitudes expressed within sixteenth and seventeenth century British contexts formed the Puritan ethos, and this is what historians have intuited since the seventeenth century. Indeed, I agree with Jacob Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish when they stated, in 1962, "Alongside or in place of the Elizabethan spirit arose a new ethos, the Puritan ethos. It was the Puritan ethos which served as the English counterpart to the displacement of the Italian Renaissance by the Reformation."[63] In other words, the Puritan

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Roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Byran and the Outbreak of the English Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[60] Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689,* 6-8.

[61] Thus Richard L. Greaves writes, "Nonconformists of nearly all stripes shared a common goal—the dream of a church conformable to the precepts of Scripture." Greaves, *Saints and Rebels: Seven Nonconformists in Stuart England* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 2.

[62] I here include Sabbath observance because this was an important aspect of Puritan practical divinity. See John H. Primus, *Holy Time: Moderate Puritanism and the Sabbath* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1989); and Kenneth L. Parker, *The English Sabbath: A Study of Doctrine and Discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Both Primus and Parker have also studied the life and work of Richard Greenham, Puritanism's famous Sabbatarian. Cf. John H. Primus, *Richard Greenham: The Portrait of an Elizabethan Pastor* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998); Kenneth L. Parker and Eric Josef Carlson, eds., *"Practical Divinity": The Works and Life of Revd Richard Greenham* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998).

[63] Jacob Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition: From Leonardo to Hegel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 145.

Reformation is distinct from the Protestant Reformation, and even the English Reformation from which it grew, and came into its own identity and ethos over the course of its existence.

Thus, Downame, Rous, and Crisp, were members of the Puritan Reformation. Their narratives should be seen as part of the greater narrative of English Puritanism as a whole; that is, an overarching agenda to for reformation, which, in turn, expressed differently as it adapted to and evolved with the society around them, but which nonetheless show a natural progression and development. Not only were these Puritans influenced by the writings of earlier Puritans from the sixteenth century, their own writings contributed to the existence and promulgation of the Puritan Reformation throughout the seventeenth century. This contribution is attested to not only in that their writings were often republished, but also when, where, and how often they were disseminated across cultures. Thus, in short, these Puritans should be seen as contributors to a cultivation of their own English vineyard, as members of the Puritan Reformation of the seventeenth century, which had its roots and impetus in Elizabethan Puritanism, but which came its own formal identity at Westminster. Though distinct, they should not be seen as members of different *Puritanisms*, which suggests irreconcilable diversity, but rather as members of a richly diversified *Puritanism*, united not only in their social contexts and theologies, but also in their vision of the Christian life. But how do we identify Puritans? Let us briefly turn to that question, draw some conclusions, and then conclude this book.

7.4 Identifying Puritans

Given the general pattern of Puritanism as a distinctive style of divinity and piety, and as a form of "hot" and "intense" Protestantism, which generally related to Reformed orthodoxy, how are we to understand or apply this term to such controversial figures as John Goodwin, Joseph Hall, John Eaton, Lodowick Muggleton, Thomas Adams, and John Milton, among others? Were they Puritans? For Goodwin, historians Coffey, Webster, and Spurr allow for the existence of Arminian or Arminian-like Puritans.[64] While I am reticent to follow suit, given the immense anti-Arminianism of Puritanism in general, and consequently its status as a "heresy" in the seventeenth century, perhaps the best way is to assess Goodwin and those like him as forms of "hybrid" or "radical" Puritanism, or those Puritans who stood close to the mainstream and had its characteristic theological and pietist structures, but who digressed significantly from its orthodoxy, had more "radical" leanings, or that possibly metamorphosed into something other, being influenced by competing theological currents and crossing confessional boundaries (e.g. Muggletonians, Ranters, Family of Love). As Glenn Burgess observed, "historians are much more concerned with origins and causes than they are with consequences, effects or

[64] John Coffey, *John Goodwin and the Puritan Revolution: Religion and Intellectual Change in Seventeenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 10; Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England,* 147; Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603-1689,* 68. Cf. Peter Lake, "Introduction: Puritanism, Arminianism and Nicholas Tyacke," in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England,* ed. Kenneth C. Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 1-15.

'aftermath.'"[65]

This broader definition would allow room for Goodwin and Baxter, both of who offered competing ideas about justification and predestination, but who were undoubtedly "Puritan" with respect to the hotness of their piety, overall theology, and recognition as such by contemporaries.[66] Though Baxter did digress from Reformed orthodoxy in his formulation of justification, he nonetheless should be seen as being within its borders, advancing both precisianist and neonomian strains. Thus, there is some plasticity within the confessional boundaries of confessionally minded Puritanism, which has been shown in the case studies of Downame, Rous, and Crisp.

This broader approach would allow qualified use for the "puritan phases" of Joseph Hall, who, though being born to Puritan parents and imbibed with Puritanism at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, came to defended episcopacy by divine right, but whose *Meditations* (1606), and other devotional works were favored among the Puritans; and John Milton, who seems to defy Puritan classification because of his Socinian and quasi-Arian tendencies, as members of the greater narrative, though definitely on the fringes and not orthodox Reformed.[67] Indeed, Coffey remarks that English religion should be seen

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[65] Glenn Burgess, "Radicalism and the English Revolution," in *English Radicalism, 1550-1850*, ed. Glen Burgess and Matthew Festenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62.

[66] For a recent attempt to classify Thomas Adams, see J. Sears McGee, "On Misidentifying Puritans: The Case of Thomas Adams," *Albion* 30 (Autumn, 1998): 401-18. McGee concludes that though Adams is more like Puritans than others he "is best seen as a mainstream Protestant—A Calvinist, a great evangelist like John King or George Downham, both preachers as well as bishops, sharing much with their puritan confreres but in no sense puritans themselves." McGee bases his conclusion, in part, on the fact that Adams was not in the "web of connections" of London Puritans and did not associate himself with them. It is noteworthy that though Adams' *Works* were printed in the nineteenth century as part of the "Nichol's Series of Standard Divines: Puritan Period," he is not counted among those Puritan divines in Benjamin Brooks's *Lives of the Puritans* (1813). Cf. Moira P. Baker, "Thomas Adams," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: British Prose Writers of the Early Seventeenth Century, Volume 151,* ed. Clayton D. Lein (Detroit: Gall Publishers, 1995): 3-10.

[67] See John Rogers, "Milton and the Heretical Priesthood of Christ," in *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture,* ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 203-20. Keeble, who aptly observes Milton's digression from Puritan doctrine, in the end, sees Milton's obsession with the conscience as indicative of the puritan bias and even makes the provocative statement, "To read Milton is to know what it was to be a Puritan." Keeble, "Milton and Puritanism," 126, 139-40. Cf. Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton's Peculiar Grace: Self-Representation and Authority* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 21-44, where Fallon correctly sees Milton as embodying "the extreme development of Puritan belief and practice," but not as representative of mainstream Puritan practice and perspective. In some sense Milton defies classification because of his adeptness at mixing orthodox structures with heretical ones. On Milton's exposure to moderate Puritanism in his early life, which consisted of both personal and family connections, see Jeffrey Alan Miller, "Milton and the Conformable Puritanism of Richard Stock and Thomas Young," in *Young Milton: The Emerging Author, 1620-1642*, ed. Edward Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 72-106. Though Milton was imbibed in Puritan *dogma* and *praxis* in his youth, he would later "retain his anti-Papist views and his dislike of rich, morally lax aristocrats throughout his life, but he would later repudiate [Puritan] views on marriage…Sabbatarianism…and…tithes. Indeed, later in his life, Milton did not even attend church." Neil Forsyth, *John Milton: A Biography* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008), 17.

In his book on Milton, David Loewenstein distinguishes between "orthodox" and "radical" Puritanism, which in itself is a helpful distinction in that it bifurcates between the mainstream of Puritan thought and those branches that significantly stretched beyond it. He writes, "Puritanism itself harbored contradictory impulses: its tendencies towards liberty of conscience and towards discipline, towards

as a continuum whose positions were often blurred at the edges; this should allow for some flexibility when determining "Puritan" classifications.[68] Scholars should also take into account that various conformist divines either inclined towards puritanism (e.g. James Ussher) or had phases when they were more sympathetic to Puritan intensity (e.g. Lancelot Andrewes, Joseph Hall).[69] Identifying Puritans within the seventeenth century is based, in part, on intuition, and on the evidence of historical inquiry. This intuitive sense dates to the seventeenth century, and continues to this day; however, evidence should guard intuition. By examining thinkers within their theological and social contexts, and especially in relating them to the consensus reached at Westminster and embodied within the devotional corpus of its members, one can get a sense of whether "Puritan" really applies in any given case, or at any given time in a person's maturation.

But how can one be excluded from being a Puritan? Those thinkers who endorsed strict ceremonial forms of worship, or who allowed for the use of images within personal or corporate devotion, who deviated significantly from the teachings espoused at

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spiritual individualism and towards building a godly community." David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 6, 8, 20, 65, 95, 178, 183, 190, 238-9. Other than Milton, Loewenstein's "radicals" include Gerrard Winstanley, Abiezer Coppe, George Fox, and William Dell. There is indeed a spectrum of *dogma* and *praxis* within Puritanism.

On Joseph Hall's relation to Puritanism and divine meditation, see Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, "Love Tricks and Flea-Bitings: Meditation, Imagination and the Pain of Christ in Joseph Hall and Richard Crawshaw," in *Meditatio-Refashioning the Self: Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, ed. Karl Enenkel and Walter Melion (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 212-14; Peter Damrau, *The Reception of English Puritan Literature in Germany* (London: Money Publishing, 2006), 71-95; D. C. Mantz, S. E. Gardiner, and E. M. Ramsden, "'The Benefit of an Image, Without the Offence:' Anglo-Dutch Emblematics and Hall's Liberation of the Lyric Soul," in *Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Field of the* Emblem, ed. Bart Westerweel (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 253-76; and Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "Popularity, Prelacy, and Puritanism in the 1630s: Joseph Hall Explains Himself," *The English Historical Review,* Vol. 111, No. 443 (September, 1996): 856-81. Van Dijkuizen notes that prior to the first decade of the seventeenth century the practice of meditation had been mostly a Catholic discipline with most English books consisting of those translated from Spanish sources. Hall was able to popularize the discipline within the English church and had a profound influence on the Puritan devotional writers of the seventeenth century, including Isaac Ambrose, whose definition of "meditation" is almost word-for-word from Hall. Moreover, "the sea change that Hall engineered in Protestant meditation led to the release of a flood of Puritan aesthetic energy, central to England and the Dutch Republic, which, from thence and Germany, rolled throughout the Protestant world for centuries to come" (Mantz, et al, 254). Damrau equates "Puritan meditation" with Hall. There is some scholarly debate as to how "Protestantized" Catholic sources became before they made it to England's printing presses. See Richard A. McCabe, *Joseph Hall: A Study in Satire and Meditation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Frank Livingstone Huntley, *Bishop Hall and Protestant meditation in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study with the Texts of "The Art of Divine Meditation" (1606) and "Occasional Meditations" (1633)* (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981); and U. Milo Kauffmann, *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 120-33. Cf. Frank Livingstone Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall, 1575-1656: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979), 71-90, 91-101.

[68] Coffey, "The Problem of 'Scottish Puritanism,'" 69.

[69] Jonathan D. Moore, "James Ussher's Influence on the Synod of Dordt," in *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt, 1618-1619,* ed. Aza Goudriaan and Fred van Lieburg (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 163, 177; P. E. McCullough, "Andrewes, Lancelot (1555-1626)," *ODNB;* Patrick Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1983), 438-9. See also M. M. Knappen, "The Early Puritanism of Lancelot Andrewes," *Church History,* Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1933): 95-104.

Westminster, and who criticized "the godly" for their reformation of morals and manners can, to a large degree, be seen as being outside the confessionally minded fold.[70] They represent the class of society to which Puritans were reacting.[71] But even here one needs nuancing. There are those ceremonial Anglicans, such as Lancelot Andrewes, who was renowned for his promotion of a deeply devotional and personal faith, who were exposed to Puritanism in their formative years. Indeed, Andrewes carried with him elements of the Puritan ethos, which he had been exposed to in his youth, well into adulthood.[72] Further, those Puritans who deviated from the greater theological consensus, but who nonetheless retained aspects of its practice and theology, can, with qualified use, be understood to stand within relation to that consensus, as members of the greater Puritan Reformation, because that is the society from which they emerged, and, in some ways, never left.

Daniel Featley is another interesting case because he was a confessionally minded Calvinist who advocated episcopacy, but was nonetheless invited to and did attend the Westminster Assembly. He was "Calvinist" and "Reformed," but not necessarily "Puritan," seen, perhaps, in the severe way in which Parliament imprisoned him later in life. He did, however, have a reputation as a controversialist and refuter of Arminianism, and in this sense he found common ground with the assembly's hatred of "free-will" doctrine. Moreover, it is possible his invitation to sit at Westminster and confer on the debates was politically motived. Regardless, Alec Ryrie opines that Featley was both a "patron of puritanism" and a "contented conformist," and adds, "As Julia Merritt has pointed out, while historians are naturally attracted to 'cantankerous, divisive, and controversial figures,' we should not ignore 'emollient, unifying, pastorally sensitive puritan clergymen.'"[73]

Peter Heylyn, who wrote approvingly of iconoclasm, and praised Thomas Cartwright's critique of the Rhemish Testament, and had numerous Puritan connections, evidences some approval of Puritan attitudes, but as Anthony Milton points out, "Heylyn's

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[70] As, for instance, in allowing images of the Incarnation to be produced. See William Perkins, *A Reformed Catholike* (London, 1597), 169-82. David J. Davis elaborates on Perkins's general disdain for image use within devotion, in contrast to Vermigli's permitting that the humanity of Christ could, like all other physical subjects, be depicted and painted. Davis, *Seeing Faith, Printing Pictures: Religious Identity During the English Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 59-60, 107, 159-60.

[71] See, for instance, William Ames, *A Fresh Svit Against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship* (s.l., 1633). See also David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 197-98, where Cressy comments on the "sensitive" and "opaque areas of early modern culture" as they relate to the further Reformation of ceremonies as reforming "allegedly Jewish, popish, or superstitious practices."

[72] Thus Kenneth L. Parker points out that Andrewes, for instance, retained strict Sabbatarian views long after his youthful "puritan phase." Parker, *The English Sabbath: A Study of Doctrine and Discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99. Whether or not a strict Sabbath observance was a unique Puritan contribution to the English Church bears further investigation. Cf. Parker, *The English Sabbath*, 2; Laurie Throness, *A Protestant Purgatory: Theological Origins of the Penitentiary Act, 1779* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 159; Edward Martin Allen, "Nicholas Bownde and the Context of Sunday Sabbatarianism" (PhD thesis; Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008), 6; John H. Primus, *Holy Time: Moderate Puritanism and the Sabbath* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990); John Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 15-16.

[73] Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, 7; cf. Julia F. Merritt, "The Pastoral Tightrope: A Puritan Pedagogue in Jacobean London," in *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, ed. Thomas Cogswell, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 160.

opinions were convention ones for his time. While not overtly 'godly,' they nonetheless displayed none of the divisive attitudes and reservations of a new breed of 'avant-garde conformist' such as Lancelot Andrews, John Buckeridge, William Laud or Richard Montagu."[74]

Perhaps much confusion within this enterprise of identifying and defining Puritans rests in the symbiotic nature of religious belief within the English Church itself. Further, while Puritans generally sided with Parliament during the English Civil Wars, this was not always the case, as the historical events surrounding the execution of the Puritan Christopher Love point out.[75] This points again to diversity of opinion in how to achieve the Puritan Reformation.

In sum, classifications are not always easy and require careful contextualization, if, for no other reason, than because human beings are complicated, contradictory, and defy neat categories. Classifications are based on evidence and intuition, but the former should outweigh the latter. Moreover, consideration must be given to the society in which an individual belonged. Individuals are not above society, nor are societies merely the ideations of an individual. Distinctions could, and perhaps should, be made between identifiable "mainstream" Puritanism, and non-mainstream "Radical Puritanism," the former having strong confessional commitments and sensibilities, and the latter that, at times, moved beyond the former, but even here one must concede to the strong ties between "radicals" and their confessionally minded counterparts.

7.5 Conclusion

Since the sixteenth century, "the terms Puritan" and "Puritanism" have had a robust industry of use. Historians have attempted, with varying degrees of success, to come to some sort of consensus as to their precise meaning. There are generally two perspectives with a wide spectrum between. On one end are those who have questioned the historical validity of these terms as useful designations because of their seeming inability to be applied evenly and accurately within various contexts. Those of the other side have defended its use to varying degrees and projected more optimistic outcomes of historical inquiry. Within this latter group there are those who prefer either more *nominalist* or *realist* approaches. Those advancing nominalism generally see Puritanism as a movement for reform, and those of the realist persuasion focus on identifying Puritanism as a distinctive way of weaving doctrine with piety. Puritanism cannot be understood only in terms of its behavior or thought, both of which could be seen in wider groups of the

[74] Anthony Milton, Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: The Career and Writings of Peter Heylyn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 10, 14.

[75] In 1649, Love became involved in a plot to assist Scottish covenanters to bring back the exiled Charles II to the English throne. He was executed in 1651 after being found guilty of treason by the High Court. See Christopher Love, *A Cleare and Necessary Vindication of the Principles and Practices of Me Christopher Love, Since my Tryall Before and Condemnation by, the High Court of Iustice, whereby It is Manifested, That a Close Prison, a Long Sword, a High Court, and a Bloody Scaffold, Have Not in the Least Altered My Judgment* (London, 1651), 9-11; Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648-53* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 244.

seventeenth century, but in its style; that is, in the way thought and behavior intersect to form a *medulla divinitatis*.

To account for *diversitas* among Puritans, some historians have begun to speak of *Puritanisms* as preferable to *Puritanism* in the singular. This deconstruction is not unlike that of the *Reformation* versus *Reformations* debate in that both fields are trying to account for both *unitas* and *diversitas*. However, the matter is more important in Post-Reformation England because *Puritanisms* suggests that there was greater or irreconcilable diversity among "the godly," as opposed to a more unifying standard to which they generally subscribed. To address this lacuna, Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Familienähnlichkeit* offers valuable and insightful ways to begin to sort out the definitions problem.

There is not one single defining feature of Puritanism. Rather, Puritanism was a cluster of attitudes and priorities that centered on a distinctive style that combined divinity with the practice of piety, characterized by its degree of hotness or intensity. Drawing insight from Norbert Elias's formative work on the society of individuals, the simple narrative of a thinker is not enough to enrich our understanding of Puritanism. The individual must be understood to exist within relation to their society, being intimately connected to its sages and pariahs. Therefore, the concept of narrative and metanarrative is a useful, even essential, way of understanding the collective identity of Puritans cultivating their own English vineyard for greater reform of not only their own lives, but other members of the English Church and nation.

Identifying Puritans in the seventeenth century is a difficult enterprise and needs nuancing. However, given Puritanism's strong theological identity, and its production of a confessional standard, one can employ both evidence and intuition to assess whether an individual advanced the Puritan Reformation and whether they were the objects of that reforming society.

Thus, Puritans and Puritanism should be seen as a cohesive though varied movement and network of individuals connected by overlapping similarities and representing distinct though often-complementary strains. Notions of *Puritanisms*, while helpful in distinguishing between different polarities within English Puritanism, do not ultimately allow for or recognize the undeniable continuity existing within Puritanism; it inadvertently places too much attention on the individual being above the society to which they belonged, and does not sufficiently account for the relatedness and interdependence of confessionally minded Puritans, or adequately concede that "radical" Puritans as often emerged from the shadows of their mainstream counterparts, as they were innovators of something new.